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SUBJECT: Bi-weekly Review - October 1 - 16, 1955. TAR-2 TRS-2 FRB-2

POLITICAL

Coming Elections for the Western House of Assembly (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Premier of the Western Region, Chief Obafemi AWOLOWO, has announced that it is uncertain whether the new elections will be held in 1956 or 1957 in the Western House of Assembly. The announcement was made during an address to the eighth annual General Assembly of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa. This was the first public pronouncement to be made by the Premier concerning the probable date of the next elections. By constitutional convention it is the prerogative of the Premier to ask the Governor to dissolve the Legislature. It is also his prerogative to choose the date of the ensuing elections. The term of the current Western House of Assembly is due to expire in the early part of 1957.

Chief Awolowo in his address stated that the Western Region of Nigeria is prepared to have full self government next year. He added that self government in 1956 as now envisaged would mean that the British Governor would no longer have anything to do with the government of the people.

The Premier then discussed the question of the separate states of Nigeria. He stated that he was certain that the Western Region would be divided into two states, the Yoruba and the Benin Delta State.

Remarks of Chairman of the U.N.I.P. Concerning Independence (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mr. Alvar IKOKU, Chairman of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Eastern House of Assembly has stated that the timetable for self government for Nigeria has been so upset by recent events in the country, that a large segment of the population is beginning to realize that a more stable home government must be ensured before demanding complete national independence.

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REPORTER

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NCNC Votes £50,000 Campaign Fund (UNCLASSIFIED)

In an attempt to overcome its relatively poor showing in the recent local elections the NCNC has voted £50,000 as a campaign fund for next year's elections for membership in the Western House of Assembly. Dr. M. I. OKPARA, Chairman of the NCNC Eastern Working Committee has announced that the party hopes to win fifty of the eighty seats in the House and will arrange to have full time paid organizers in each of the eighty constituencies. The party's immediate objective in its fight for supremacy is to qualify to speak for the South at next year's Constitutional Conference. If the party wins the elections it will most certainly ask for dominion status for Southern Nigeria. An emergency meeting of the Party's executive committee will be held at Ibadan on October 27 to finalize arrangements for the elections.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The above remarks of the Premier of the Western Region and the Chairman of the UNIP are, of course, merely statements of individual politicians which reflect their own personal ideas on the subject of independence. They cannot be construed to be any more than personal opinions and certainly do not reflect the probable turn of events once the 1956 Constitutional Conference is under way in London. Present day plans for the future status of Nigeria are nearly as numerous as there are individual political leaders and will require a great deal of consolidation before any one leader can be said to speak for the majority.

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ECONOMIC

Federal Regional Government Finances Remain Satisfactory (UNCLASSIFIED)

The financial position of the Governments of the Federation of Nigeria continues to be satisfactory. Revenue exceeded expenditures by a safe margin in all Regions during the period from April 1, 1 '4 to January 31, 1955.

Actual revenues of the Federal and Northern Nigerian Governments exceeded the estimates by more than £3,000,000 and a little under £2,000,000 respectively during the period covered. Both in Western and Eastern Nigeria actual revenues fell short of the estimates by more than £1,500,000 and £500,000 respectively.

Statistics for the first ten months of the last financial year show that the Federal Government earned £49,682,521 6s. 4d and spent £45,971,267 11s 2d. The total cost of operating the nine Federal ministries the Council of Ministers and the House of Representatives during this period is £152,314 14s. 10d.

The revenue of the Northern Nigeria Government amounted to £9,407,429 11s 1d while the total expenditures were £6,868,425 10s 7d.

The Government of Western Nigeria earned £9,498,933 14s 3d during the above period as against expenditures of £8,235,429 10s 1d. The maintenance of the Region's ten ministries, the Western House of Assembly, the Premier's office and Executive Council cost the Government £129,757 4s 9d.

The revenue of Eastern Nigeria amounted to £6,360,037 6s 8d and the expenditure for the same period was £4,116,192 6s 11d. A total of £92,125 13s 3d was spent for the maintenance of the Region's sixteen ministries, the office of the Premier, the Eastern House of Assembly and the Executive Council.

New Cameroons Timber Development (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Southern Cameroons Government has recently concluded an important timber agreement with Messrs. Lofor Trading Limited. The agreement which was signed in Buea late in September gives the company a twenty-one year concession to work nearly 170 square miles of forest in the Kumba Division, north of Victoria. The company will export timber from Tiko and Victoria to the world's markets and as part of the agreement will establish a sawmill for the production of sawn timber for local use.

COMMENTS (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The successful conclusion of this agreement marks the first substantial result of the Government's announced intention to

attract foreign capital into the territory.

New Cement Plant at Port Harcourt (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Nigerian Engineering and Manufacturing Company, a firm of African industrialists will begin to produce finished cement from their factory at Port Harcourt. It is hoped that the new plant will be in full operation within the next eight months. Production will be made with the help of German experts.

The need for local cement is made obvious by the fact that at the present time Nigeria is the largest single importer of British Cement. Up to the end of August of this year Nigeria had imported 239,354 tons of cement from the U.K. valued at £1,294,000.

Cameroon-Nigeria Road Development (UNCLASSIFIED)

Work has begun on the construction of the last 14 miles of the new road to connect Tinta Assumbo in the Mamfe Division of the Southern Cameroons with Obudu in Eastern Nigeria. The new road is 27 miles long and the entire construction is being carried out by communal labor. The villagers have already appealed to the Government of the Southern Cameroons for financial help in building bridges on the road.

At Ekona, in the Victoria Division, a road construction program is being pursued by the Cameroons Development Corporation.

Recent Progress of Eastern Development Corporation (UNCLASSIFIED)

Rapid progress had been made in the past six months in the planting of new acrage in estates owned by the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation. Col. S. E. THORBURN, Planting advisor of the corporation has announced that still more extensive development of the plantations is being planned for next year which is expected to be a record year for expansion.

The Kwa Falls Oil Palm Estate which is already in production has its own pioneer oil mill where the extraction rate of oil is the highest in West Africa. 250 new acres of oil palm were planted on this estate during the past six months. Selected high yielding palm varieties some of which were imported from Malaya have achieved excellent results.

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LABOR

Over 52,000 workers in the minesfield in the vicinity of Jos went on strike at Midnight October 16. The action was taken as a result of the failure of the Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare and the Northern Regional Minister of Social Development and Survey to effect a settlement on both sides.

The workers' demands are: the granting of African workers of a 25 percent bonus on columbite, yearly increments, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Gorsuch recommendations.

The employers' association took the stand that they were: (a) not willing to make an offer of a general increase of pay at the present time but would keep the matter under review, (b) not willing to grant annual increments in view of the recent dicision of the arbitrator to award bi-annual increments, (c) not willing to pay a bonus on columbite, and (d) not prepared to review the pay of artisans in line with a decision taken by the North Regional Government subject to the application of a Government trade test.

The three unions; the Nigerian African Mine Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria Workers' Union, and the Northern Mineworkers' Union jointly issued a statement in which they appealed to the Government and the Police to protect their interests during the strike and not to provoke the strikers.

Yesterday twelve rifles which were believed to be owned by Europeans in the minesfield were collected as a safety precaution by the police. About 300 additional police have been stationed in the vicinity.

At the present time it is understood that no acceptable compromise could be reached between the unions' view that there should be a graduated increase of from 25 to 30 percent over the wages now paid as a result of the arbitration earlier this year and the payment of annual increments; and the employers' view that circumstances do not warrant the granting of any further wage concessions. The employers claim that there is no ground for departing at this time from the arbitrator's previous award of bi-annual increments.

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul General

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